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Allen Dulles Retires

The long-expected announcement of the retirement of Allen W. Dulles as director of CIA marks the end of a stormy era in its brief history. The CIA was created by Congress in 1947 as an advisory body to the President and National Security Council to co-ordinate intelligence information. Its budget and staff are secret but it has been reported that it spends about one billion dollars a year and has a staff of 12,000 to 18,000.

Mr. Dulles was appointed director in 1953 by President Eisenhower and enjoyed an extraordinary freedom during the period when his brother John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State. The CIA, under statutory authority to perform "other functions and duties" relating to national security intelligence, embarked on a world-wide cloak and dagger operation. There were reports that CIA upset governments in Guatemala, Iran, and Egypt. During this period CIA exercised broad responsibility for foreign policy which properly belonged to the President and State Department.

When President Kennedy took office, he reappointed Mr. Dulles to emphasize the non-partisan character of the agency. The CIA had been under fire since the U-2 incident and the Cuban fiasco led to a re-examination of CIA by Gen. Maxwell Taylor. As a result of Gen. Taylor's findings, the responsibility for large-scale covert military operations, if and when there are any, has been transferred to the Defense Department.

The appointment of John McCone, a Los Angeles Republican, continues the symbolism of bi-partisanship in CIA. He is no doubt a capable administrator but his record as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission under President Eisenhower was not distinguished. We hope that he takes over his new duties under a clear understanding that the CIA will confine itself to intelligence operations under firm policy control of the President, leaving foreign policy making and military operations to the proper authorities.